

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/DISTRICT COUNCILS

**AT A MEETING OF THE TAXI LIAISON GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
MONDAY 1 MARCH 2010**

Present: Councillor S Khan (Chair)

Councillors M Walker - WYITA
R Thornber - Calderdale MBC
D Blackburn - Leeds CC

Officers in attendance: A Pickerill - Calderdale MC
M Stocchero - Kirklees MC
M Deplacido - Leeds CC
K Straw - Wakefield MDC
PC Lobb - West Yorkshire Police
J English - Metro
A Chymera - LTP3 Team
H Standing - LTP3 Team
R Chaplin - WYITA

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors C Iredale (Kirklees), D Dagger (Wakefield) and K Rhodes (WYITA).

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by members at the meeting.

8. MINUTES

Further to minute 4, Safety and Security Update, in respect of the Department of Transport's (DfT) research into personal security for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers, it was noted that there was no deadline for a response and Calderdale agreed to co-ordinate a joint reply.

With regard to the Liaison Group's concerns regarding future funding of training initiatives, Metro would draft a letter to the DfT and circulate it to the Districts for comment.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That Calderdale Licensing Authority co-ordinate a joint response to the Department for Transport's research regarding personal security for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers.
- (b) That a draft letter be circulated to the West Yorkshire Licensing Authorities regarding the future funding of training initiatives and the letter be sent to the DfT.
- (c) That the minutes of the meeting of the Liaison Group held on 7 September 2009 be approved.

9. SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on activities to promote safety and security for taxi drivers and passengers in West Yorkshire.

Crime Statistics

PC Lobb from West Yorkshire Police was welcomed to the meeting by the Chair. Members had previously discussed the availability of crime statistics regarding assaults on taxi and PHV drivers and each Licensing Authority had requested crime data on incidents from their respective Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. However not all districts had received the information and a progress report would be prepared for a future meeting of the Group.

Members were advised that the information Kirklees had received from their Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership did not relate specifically to crimes against taxi/PHV drivers. PC Lobb explained that although occupations could be recorded when incidents were logged, it was not a mandatory field and also that the police computer system was not robust enough to sort data by occupation type. It was acknowledged that there was also a reluctance from drivers to report incidents because of the loss of earnings incurred whilst giving statements. Kirklees had gathered data on the scale of incidents for the 9 month period from 1 January 2009 to 30 September 2009. As a result of the data collated, £28,000 funding had been made available through Kirklees' Licensing Department and Safer Stronger Communities for the implementation of CCTV cameras in Hackney Carriages and PHVs. This would be based on match funding from the trade with the intention of a greater proportion of funding being offered to drivers who had been the victim of crime and a progress report would be prepared for a future meeting.

Demonstration Vehicle

The Liaison Group had previously discussed the possible joint procurement of a demonstration vehicle to showcase approved safety equipment. It was reported that Leeds officers had reviewed appropriate specifications for a vehicle and the

cost of purchase and fitting out would be c. £17,000. However it was not clear that a demonstration vehicle would encourage the greater use of safety equipment in view of the reluctance by the trade to part fund other safety and security initiatives with the Licensing Authorities and it was agreed not to pursue this at the present time.

Leeds' Review of Safety and Security Schemes

Members were provided with an update in respect of Leeds' 50/50 funding scheme for proprietors to install an approved CCTV systems or Safety Shield. It was reported that only 48 out of approximately 4700 licensed vehicles had participated in the scheme and feedback had indicated that only a fully funded scheme would attract a greater take up.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a progress report be prepared for a future meeting regarding crime statistics.
- (c) That the joint funding by Licensing Authorities of a demonstration vehicle not be pursued at the present time.

10. LEEDS CITY CENTRE TAXI CONGESTION ISSUES - UPDATE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of the evaluation of actions to address congestion problems caused by taxis in Leeds City Centre.

It was reported that two new ranks had been provided at Meadow Lane and Lower Briggate and Leeds City Council had issued instructions for other new 24 hour and night time taxi rank spaces to be introduced throughout the city centre. Further actions to alleviate the problem were noted including the continued enforcement provided by Leeds Parking Services in the Boar Lane and New Station Street areas and it was reported that a team of officers from the Police, taxi and PHV trade and Leeds City Council was being convened to consider enforcement issues. With regard to the proposed trial use of bus stops as night time ranks, it was noted that approval was still awaited from the Department for Transport.

It was reported that the new ranks had been well received by the trade and these were being controlled at night via marshals. However some issues had been reported regarding the communications between ranks and members were advised of a proposal for the trialling of a roadside electronic system. This would be similar to the systems used to display available car park spaces and would advise taxis waiting at feeder ranks of spaces that had become available on the main ranks.

Members were advised that the bus operators had welcomed the efforts made to relieve the congestion and they had reported an overall improvement in bus movements in the Headrow, New Station Street and City Square areas. However concern was expressed that some services continued to experience problems during the day on the Headrow. Leeds City Council would advise the joint enforcement team being convened that complaints were still being received.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

11. THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN AND TAXIS – DISCUSSION

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of development of the next West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan which also provided an opportunity to discuss the integration of taxis in strategic transport planning and delivery.

Members received a presentation which identified the context and approach to the development of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 3 (WYLTP3). It was noted that the ITA were responsible for the production and subsequent implementation of LTP3 and would work in partnership with the five District Councils.

Members were asked for their views on the role of taxis in the development and delivery of LTP3 and the following comments were made:

- The use of new technology including GPS tracking systems, integrated and smartcard ticketing should be explored
- The need for a common approach across all five districts in developing policies eg. use of bus lanes/bus gates by taxis
- Introduce more High Occupancy Vehicle lanes to assist in faster journey times for taxis
- Explore possibility of reintroducing Taxibuses – these had been welcomed in Calderdale before they were withdrawn due to lack of patronage
- Use of 'greener' vehicles in order to meet emission targets

Members considered it would be beneficial to consult with taxi and PHV operators from each district and Metro agreed to liaise with the Licensing Authorities to arrange meetings.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.